

The Smith patent discloses a "practice attachment for a golf putter having a ball engaging face of substantially trapezoidal shape in section and including a base face portion and side face portions intersecting the base face portion at obtuse angles, there being wing portions extending from the attachment for engagement with strips of pressure sensitive tape to removably secure the attachment to the putting face removably with the base face portion parallel to the putting face." The Examiner stated with regard to the Smith patent that "it appears that the body having a front surface with a relatively small, centrally-located flat ball contact surface that comprises a sweet spot of the putter head."

It is respectfully submitted that the Smith patent discloses putter wherein an attachment is secured to the putting face of a putter head using strips of pressure sensitive tape. The Smith attachment thus converts a conventional putter into a practice putter.

The Hawkins, Sr. patent states that it discloses "a system for improving ones golf game by using a practice club with a very small head to hit practice balls that are light weight and preferably are very small in diameter. The novel practice golf club has a head or ball-hitting surface which is much smaller than a conventional golf club, such as either surface having a width of about 3.5 cm (1.4 in.) or less or even about 1.5 cm (0.6 in.) or less or a convex surface having a radius of less than about 1.25 cm (0.5 in.) or even about 0.8 cm (0.3 in.) or less. The practice balls are much lighter and preferably smaller than a conventional golf ball, such as less than about 30 g, for example about 1.9 cm (0.75 in.) in diameter and about 1.5 g or about 1.27 cm (0.5 in.) in diameter and about 1 g. This invention includes as optional components of the system mat means and net means. The invention can be embodied in the form of an adaptor to convert a conventional golf club to have the type of ball-hitting surface described above."

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the Hawkins, Sr. patent discloses a putter attachment or adaptor for converting a conventional golf club to a practice club. The Hawkins, Sr. patent does not disclose or suggest anything regarding putting or a practice putter. ✓

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that both the Smith or Hawkins, Sr. patents disclose devices that attach to existing clubs that adapt the club for a specific purpose. It is respectfully submitted that the prior art attachments are not permanent and are not immovable as is the present invention. The attachments of the prior art are not permanent and provide for possible alignment problems and are not necessarily stable. It is respectfully submitted that the prior art devices do not provide for a permanent sweet spot on a putter.

It is respectfully submitted that the Smith and Hawkins, Sr. patents are essentially nonanalogous art with regard to the present invention. The present invention calls for a unitary putter head comprising a single, solid, unitary body that is attached to a putter shaft. None of the devices disclosed or suggested by the Smith or Hawkins, Sr. patents provide for a putter head comprising a single, solid, unitary body.

The essence of the present invention is that it allows a user to practice putting with a device that has a permanent, nonmoving, sweet spot. This is not the case with the Smith and Hawkins, Sr. attachment devices which are attached by various means that do not provide for a

unitary structure nor would they necessarily provide for a permanent sweet spot, nor do they insure that the sweet spot is properly located or permanent.

Therefore, with specific regard to independent Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that the Smith or Hawkins, Sr. patents, taken singly or together, do not disclose or suggest a putter head that comprises "a single, solid, unitary body having a front surface with a relatively small, centrally-located, flat ball contact surface that comprises a sweet spot of the putter head and lateral portions that taper rearwardly away from the ball contact surface".

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 is not obvious in view of the Smith or Hawkins, Sr. patents, taken singly or together. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection and allowance of Claim 1 are respectfully requested.

With regard to independent Claim 9, and in view of the above arguments, it is respectfully submitted that the Smith or Hawkins, Sr. patents, taken singly or together, do not disclose or suggest a putter head that comprises "a single, solid, unitary body having a front surface with a relatively small, centrally-located, flat ball contact surface that comprises a sweet spot of the putter head and lateral portions that taper rearwardly away from the ball contact surface".

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 9 is not obvious in view of the Smith or Hawkins, Sr., taken singly or together. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection and allowance of Claim 9 are respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13 and 14 are considered patentable over the Smith or Hawkins, Sr. patents, taken singly or together, based upon the patentability of Claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection and allowance of Claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13 and 14 are respectfully requested.

Claims 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 3,489,415 issued to Smith in view of US Patent No. 5,135,228 issued to Hawkins, Sr. in view of US Patent No. 6,402,638 issued to Kelly and US Patent No. 4,121,833 issued to Prueter. The Examiner cited the Kelly and Prueter patent as disclosing a shaft inserted into the practice putter head.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 7 and 15 are patentable over the cited patents, taken singly or together, based upon the patentability of Claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection and allowance of Claims 7 and 15 are respectfully requested.

Claims 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 3,489,415 issued to Smith in view of US Patent No. 5,135,228 issued to Hawkins, Sr. and further in view of US Design Patent No. D234,962 issued to Swash. The Examiner cited the Swash patent as disclosing a shaft inserted into the practice putter head.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 7 and 15 are patentable over the cited patents, taken singly or together, based upon the patentability of Claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of Claims 7 and 15 is respectfully requested.

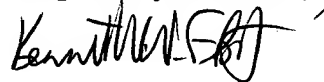
Claims 3, 8, 11 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 3,489,415 issued to Smith in view of US Patent No. 5,135,228 issued to Hawkins, Sr. and further in view of US Patent No. 5,388,832 issued to Hsu. The Examiner cited the Hsu patent as disclosing "a shaft 10 that has an offset and is inserted into the neck 16". It is respectfully submitted that Claims 3, 8, 11 and 16 are patentable over the cited patents, taken singly or together, based upon the patentability of Claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection and allowance of Claims 3, 8, 11 and 16 are respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 3, 8, 11 and 16 are patentable over the cited patents, taken singly or together, based upon the patentability of Claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of Claims 3, 8, 11 and 16 is respectfully requested.

The prior art heretofore made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure to the extent indicated by the Examiner.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-16 are not anticipated by, nor are they obvious in view of, the cited patents, taken singly or together, and are therefore patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

The following Claims have been amended in the manner indicated.

1. (Amended) A putter comprising:

a shaft having a grip disposed at an upper end;

a putter head disposed at a lower end of the shaft that comprises:

a single, solid, unitary body having a front surface with a relatively small, centrally-
5 located, flat ball contact surface that comprises a sweet spot of the putter head and lateral
portions that taper rearwardly away from the ball contact surface.

9. (Amended) In a putter having a shaft with a grip disposed at an upper end and a
putter head disposed at a lower end, wherein the putter head comprises:

a single, solid, unitary body having a front surface with a relatively small, centrally-
5 located, flat ball contact surface that comprises a sweet spot of the putter head and lateral
portions that taper rearwardly away from the ball contact surface.